

Message Text

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ORIGIN SS-15

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 CCO-00 /016 R

66011

DRAFTED BY:AF:BSALTER

APPROVED BY:AF:WBEDMONDSON

S/S-O:DCAMP

-----096438 210504Z /21

P 210354Z JAN 78 ZFF4

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USDEL SECRETARY PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 017203 TOSEC 010139

EXDIS

FOLLOWING REPEAT CAPE TOWN 0073 ACTION SECSTATE INFO USUN NEW YORK,
LONDON, BONN, PARIS AND OTTAWA JAN 20.

QUOTE: C O N F I D E N T I A L CAPE TOWN 0073

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PDEV, WA, SF, UK, US

SUBJ: NAMIBIA: PRESS REPORTS POSSIBILITY OF FOREIGN
MINISTERS MEETING

REF: STATE 01574

1. TO MY SURPRISE, WHEN I SAW BRAND FOURIE THIS MORNING
(JANUARY 20) HE TOLD ME THAT BRITISH AMBASSADOR SIR DAVID
SCOTT HAD INFORMED BOTHA OF THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE NEW
YORK MEETING WOULD BE RAISED TO THE FOREIGN MINISTER
LEVEL. FOURIE, SPEAKING PERSONALLY, COMMENTED ON A MINISTERIAL
LEVEL MEETING AS GIVING THE PROXIMITY TALKS A NEW DIMENSION.
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HE AGAIN STATED THAT ISSUE OF SAG PARTICIPATION WOULD BE
DISCUSSED IN THE CABINET ON TUESDAY, JAN 24. WHEN HE
PROBED TO FIND OUT WHAT I WOULD SAY ON MINISTERIAL
NEGOTIATIONS, I COMMENTED I UNDERSTOOD THIS POSSIBILITY
WAS UNDER CONSIDERATION, BUT I WAS UNINSTRUCTED
ON THE SUBJECT. IN RESPONSE TO MY
QUESTION ABOUT WHETHER HE AND BOTHA WOULD ATTEND

PROXIMITY TALKS, HE AGAIN GAVE A PERSONAL VIEW THAT THEY COULD NOT GET AWAY UNTIL FEB 9 OR 10 (TWO DAYS ON WHICH SAA HAS DIRECT FLIGHTS TO NEW YORK). TALKS MIGHT BE HELD THAT WEEKEND OR FROM FEB 13-15.

2. AS NOTED REFTTEL, THE RAND DAILY MAIL ON JAN 19 HAD REPORTED THE POSSIBILITY OF THE NEW YORK TALKS BEING RAISED TO THE MINISTERIAL LEVEL. IN ADDITION TO THE POINT ON SWAPO INTRANSIGENCE, THE STORY QUOTED "FOREIGN SOURCES" AS SAYING THAT THE PURPOSE OF THE PROPOSED FOREIGN MINISTER-LEVEL MEETING "WAS TO GET AROUND US/SA FRICTION AND IN PARTICULAR THE US UNITED NATIONS OFFICE UNDER MR. ANDREW YOUNG AND MR. DON MCHENRY.

3. WE DO NOT KNOW WHO THE "FOREIGN SOURCES" ARE THE COMMENTS ON USUN SOUND VERY MUCH LIKE PIK BOTHA. DURING A MEETING OF THE PRETORIA FIVE, SUBSEQUENT TO MY TALK WITH FOURIE, BRITISH EMBOFF RICHARD DORMAN, REPRESENTING THE UK SIDE, SAID THAT SIR DAVID HAD SEEN BOTHA ON JAN 18 AND INFORMED HIM OF THE POSSIBILITY OF A NEW (UNSPECIFIED) PROPOSAL REGARDING THE NEW YORK TALKS. (THIS IS AT VARIANCE WITH WHAT FOURIE TOLD ME IN PARA 1.) DORMAN SAID SCOTT TOLD BOTHA HE COULD EXPECT A MESSAGE ON THE SUBJECT ON CONFIDENTIAL

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JAN 21. DORMAN ALSO REPORTED THAT BOTHA HAD TOLD SCOTT THAT THE RAND DAILY MAIL HAD QUERIED HIM ON A FORTHCOMING STORY ON RAISING THE NEW YORK TALKS TO THE MINISTERIAL LEVEL, AND THAT HE (BOTHA) HAD REPLIED THAT HE KNEW NOTHING ABOUT IT. DORMAN ALSO READ OFF EXCERPTS FROM A BRITISH EMBASSY CABLE REPORTING SCOTT'S MEETING WITH BOTHA IN WHICH SIR DAVID REPORTED BOTHA AS SAYING HE WAS DISTRESSED WITH THE ATTITUDE OF SOME OF THE WESTERN PARTICIPANTS, IN PARTICULAR AMBASSADOR MCHENRY, WHO HE DESCRIBED AS HAVING "SOURD" ON THE TALKS AND WHO NO LONGER SEEMED INTERESTED IN REACHING AN AGREEMENT SOUTH AFRICA COULD ACCEPT. SCOTT REPORTED HE REPLIED THAT THE BIKO AFFAIR AND OTHER EVENTS HAD HARDENED ATTITUDES TOWARD SOUTH AFRICA IN BOTH THE US AND UK. BOTHA, SCOTT REPORTED, SAID HE REGRETTED THE BIKO AFFAIR, BUT THIS WAS OUT OF HIS CONTROL AND SHOULD NOT AFFECT THE NEGOTIATIONS.

4. COMMENT: FOURIE'S "PERSONAL" INTEREST IN MINISTERIAL LEVEL TALKS IS ENCOURAGING. HOW THE SOUTH AFRICANS WILL REACT WHEN THEY LEARN THAT THE HIGHER

LEVEL OF TALKS IS TIED TO THEIR AGREEING NOT TO ANNOUNCE
AN ELECTION DATE IS DIFFICULT TO PREDICT ALTHOUGH
I AM INCLINED TO BELIEVE THAT IN THE END THEY
MAY WELL ACCEPT THIS CONDITION. THE LEAKS ON MINISTERIAL
LEVEL TALKS AND THE DISTORTED BACKGROUND ON THE PROPOSAL
MAY BE USED BY THE SAG TO EXPLAIN PUBLICLY THE REVERSAL
OF ATTITUDE AND DECISION TO ATTEND THE PROXIMITY
TALKS IN FEBRUARY. BOWDLER
UNQUOTE CHRISTOPHER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TOSEC, PRESS COMMENTS, FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETINGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 21 jan 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE017203
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: AF:BSALTER
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780032-0187
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780136/aaaabeqf.tel
Line Count: 124
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: ce0a25e1-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 78 STATE 1574
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 26 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3734407
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NAMIBIA: PRESS REPORTS POSSIBILITY OF FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETING
TAGS: PDEV, WA, SF, UK, US
To: SECRETARY
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/ce0a25e1-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014